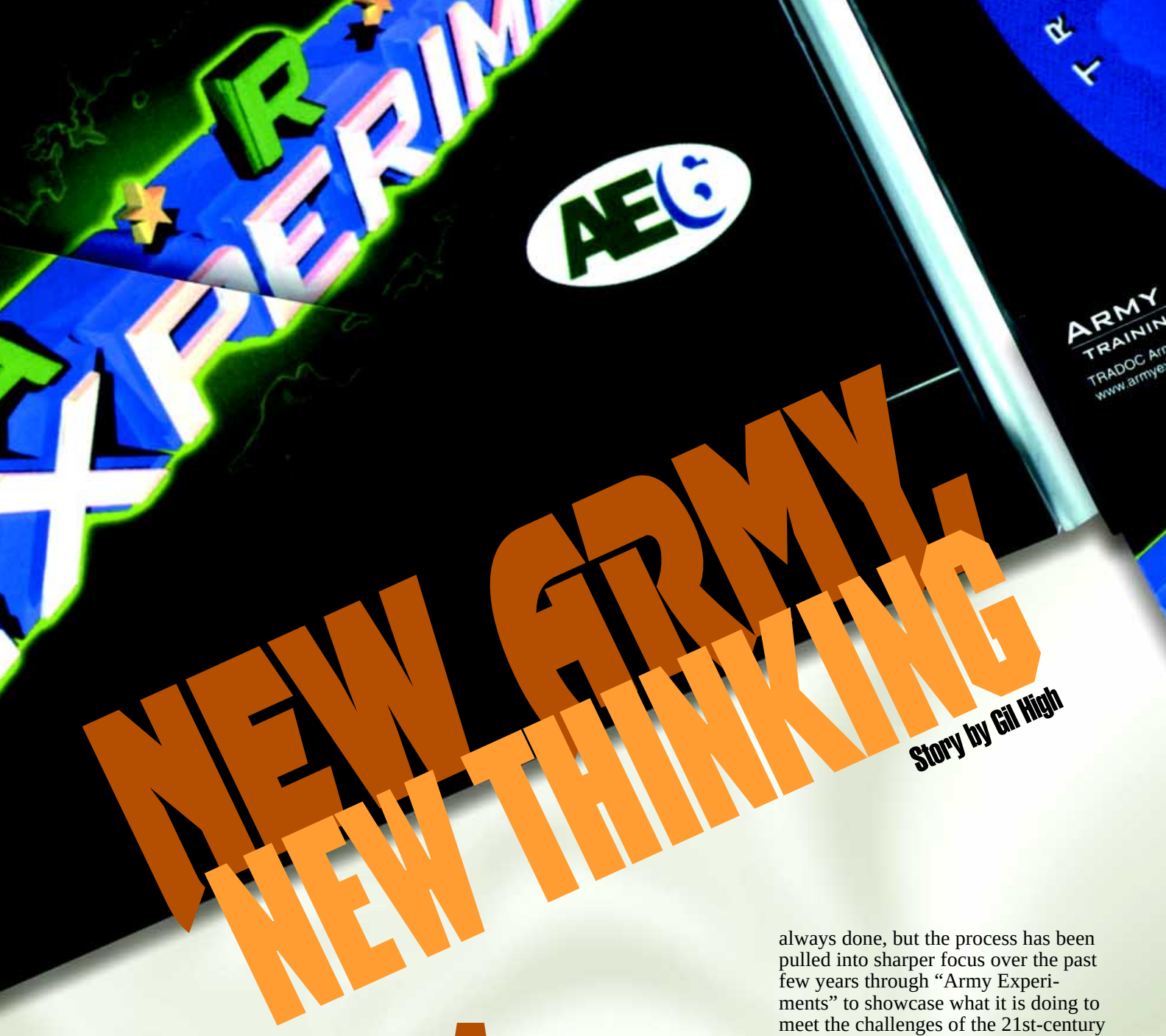


NEW ARMY, NEW THINKING

Story by Gil High

During Army Experiment 6, evaluators believe they successfully developed "adaptive" training programs that will help the Army's leaders act quickly and decisively when faced by the challenges of the 21st century.

AS leaders go about the business of transforming the Army over the next few months, the most visible elements will be the armored vehicles being demonstrated at Fort Knox, Ky., and the surrogate armored platforms being used to train the initial brigade combat teams being developed at Fort Lewis, Wash.

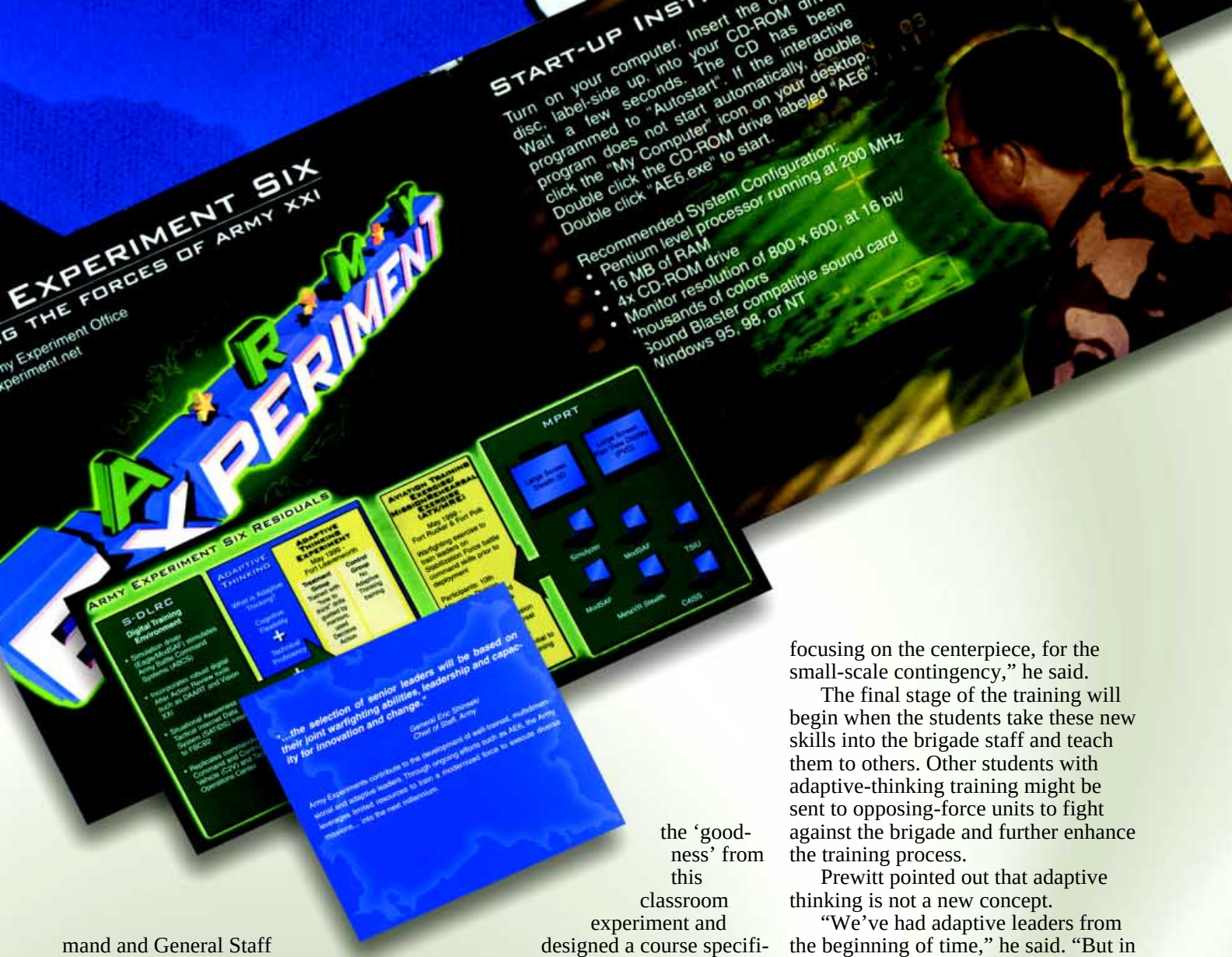
But an equally exciting component of the transformation is the preparation of the leaders of those brigades for the extremely fluid operations the units will undertake.

Teaching leaders to act quickly and decisively when the unexpected happens is something the Army has always done, but the process has been pulled into sharper focus over the past few years through "Army Experiments" to showcase what it is doing to meet the challenges of the 21st-century battlefield.

According to COL David Prewitt, director of Army Experiments 6 and 7, the experiments emphasize simulations, communications, visualization and other information technologies that affect situational awareness and situational understanding.

The Army experiments began under the direction of the Louisiana Maneuvers Task Force in 1994 and, with the completion of AE3, were transferred to the deputy chief of staff for combat developments at Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Va., in 1996, and to the deputy chief of staff for training in 1997.

In AE6, conducted at the Com-



mand and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., TRADOC evaluators believe they were successful in developing "adaptive" training programs that stress how to think.

"The objectives of AE6 were to gather and analyze data to be used to train leaders in a digitized environment; to develop a methodology for 'how to think' training; and enhance training support systems used to train and sustain leaders and staffs of digitized units," Prewitt said.

"We determined that, using this methodology, the group that went through the adaptive thinking experiment in AE6 became more adaptive," Prewitt said. "They were able to see the bigger picture and take all the different aspects of the battlefield situation into consideration, and they were able to modify their plans more effectively.

"Seeing that success, we've taken the 'goodness' from this classroom experiment and designed a course specifically for the brigade combat teams we're developing at Fort Lewis — brigades that will have lighter equipment, be organized differently and be expected to do different things."

Prewitt said the Army has already identified students now attending the Command and General Staff College who will be assigned to staff positions in the Fort Lewis brigade.

"CGSC has tailored a course for these students, to teach them how this new brigade fights. Then the students will be immersed in scenarios the new unit would be expected to encounter," Prewitt said.

"The scenarios range from peacekeeping operations to minor skirmishes, to stability-and-support operations, or whatever — because this is supposed to be a full-spectrum force all the way from humanitarian actions to major theater wars. But we're focusing on the centerpiece, for the small-scale contingency," he said.

The final stage of the training will begin when the students take these new skills into the brigade staff and teach them to others. Other students with adaptive-thinking training might be sent to opposing-force units to fight against the brigade and further enhance the training process.

Prewitt pointed out that adaptive thinking is not a new concept.

"We've had adaptive leaders from the beginning of time," he said. "But in the past, we really didn't have the means to specifically target the training of leaders to make them more adaptable. Now, we're at a stage where we think we can do that."

The next step is to apply this ability to reshaping the future Army.

"By the end of July, the staff of the initial brigade at Fort Lewis — the CGSC students earmarked for the brigade and the people already there or arriving by June — will complete a senior-leader course that incorporates adaptive thinking," Prewitt said.

"As for the rest of the Army, we'll take the lessons learned from this one-time course to train the brigade. Then we'll integrate new and improved training into all of our institutions so that through the normal course of people going through their basic and advanced courses, soldiers will receive the training they need to perform in this new Army." □